

LORANNE AUSLEY
STATE SENATOR DISTRICT 3

THE AUSLEY UPDATE



THE WEEKLY RECAP VIDEO

SENATOR AUSLEY



THE WEEKLY RECAP

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FINISHING FEBRUARY

February, the shortest month, has come to a close, but I still feel inspired by the many Black History Month events I attended all around District 3. Last weekend we celebrated in Quincy, where I marched in a joyful parade on a warm sunny day, and then headed over to the beautiful Gadsden Arts Museum to take in the artwork of our local celebrity artists Eluster Richardson and Mary Proctor. If you are not acquainted with these world-

class talents, I encourage you to head over to Quincy to see these exhibits.



BILLS

Back in the Capitol, this has been a tough week. We voted on several controversial bills that spurred long, passionate debates late into the night. One that many of you may be following is House Bill 5, which limits a woman's ability to make an informed decision about her own health care. Another is a bill that actually makes it harder to vote--a measure completely unnecessary in a state where we have one of the safest voting systems in the country backed by highly competent election supervisors. I am concerned, and honestly troubled, that we insert controversial issues into

bills that otherwise contain very good policy. As an example, HB 5 has very good language designed to improve health outcomes for women and babies. Yet, it is coupled with controversial and unconstitutional language that is simply a distraction from the real challenges so many Floridians are facing. Both bills passed along mostly party lines and we are expecting more bills like this before the end of session.

BUDGET

With one week to go, we are still working on resolving the differences between the House and the Senate budgets – this process is known as “conference.” The budget is divided into five “silos” and I serve on committees representing two of those: *Agriculture, Environment, and General Government*, and *Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development*. All the conference committees have been meeting this week to finalize the state’s 2022-23 fiscal year budget. Since there are still differences between the House and the Senate versions, the unresolved issues have been “bumped” to the Senate and House Appropriations Committee Chairs to resolve. If they can’t agree, the issues will go to the Senate President and Speaker of the House, in hopes that they can come to agreement on all issues early next week.

Session is scheduled to end a week from today (on March 11th). For that to happen the budget must be complete, printed and transmitted to every Legislator by next Tuesday to comply with the constitutionally required 72-hour public review period between receipt and voting on the budget. At this point I’m optimistic that Session will end on time with many District 3 projects funded, but I’m still working on the big issues that are important to District 3 citizens, including pay raises for state employees. Our committed and hardworking employees are the backbone of our state government. I remind my colleagues daily that none of what we do in Tallahassee would get implemented if it weren’t for our employees dedicated to public service.

HIGHLIGHTS

Speaking of dedication, I would be remiss if I didn’t take a moment to recognize Melissa Durham, a jewel of Senate District 3. Melissa will be retiring this spring after 39 years of service to the Florida Legislature. Many of you who have called or visited our Quincy office over the years have had the benefit of her efforts on your behalf. Melissa is a kind, giving spirit who cares deeply for her community – she truly embodies all that is good about public service. We will miss her! Fortunately, she has trained the new staff well, so we will continue to serve you with the benefit of her knowledge and wisdom.



It was great to have my pastor, Brad Clayton, give the opening prayer this morning. Brad's message of working together, serving each other, helping those in need and loving our neighbors was important after some tough votes and late nights in the Florida Senate this week.



Sincerely,

Lorraine Ausley
Senator, District 3

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SENATE OFFICES

-Tallahassee-

202 Senate Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
(850) 487-5003

-Quincy-

20 East Washington Street
Suite D
Quincy, FL 32351
(850) 627-0474

